

The Cheese Club

Cheese Notes Offer
02/04

coolabine caprice

goat's milk, white mould

Kenilworth, Queensland

Coolabine Farmstead is located at Kenilworth in the Obi Obi Valley behind the Blackhall Ranges in the Sunshine Coast Hinterland. It is here that cheesemaker Dee Dunham produces her award-winning range of goat's cheeses such as the Caprice, which we are delighted to offer our members for the first time.

Coolabine Homestead is run along environmentally sustainable lines, and all of the cheeses are handcrafted. Dee has been making cheese for the last five years, and is one of only two farmhouse cheesemakers in Queensland. She considers cheese-making to be an art as well as a business. For Dee it is vital to maintain control over all aspects of production, from the care of the goats right through to the packaging and distribution of the cheeses, with the emphasis always being on quality above all.

Milk for the cheeses comes from Dee's own ninety-strong herd of Anglo-Nubian and Saanen goats. She has been breeding champion goats for ten years and they are almost like members of the family - "they're precocious and naughty and their milk makes the most exquisite cheese." This combination of the two breeds is ideal for cheese-making. Anglo-Nubian goats produce less milk, but the milk has a higher solid, butterfat and protein content. Saanens are of Swiss origin and produce a high volume of milk, but with low protein solids.

Coolabine Caprice comes in lovely little rounds or 'nobs'. It is a traditional French-style soft ripened, white mould cheese. It is quite sweet with a lovely, peppery flavour on the finish and melts on the tongue. The Caprice is quite mild and creamy when young, developing full-bodied and aromatic qualities as it matures. Enjoy with a glass of sauvignon blanc and an unbleached white loaf.

jean grognè

cow's milk, white mould

Ile de France, France

After tasting an Australian triple cream cheese last offer, here is your chance to compare it with one of its French counterparts. Jean Grognè is a modern version of

the more famous 'Brillat Savarin' white mould cheese, which was first developed in the 1930's. It is a triple crème cheese, which are traditionally enriched with cream. However, Jean Grogne uses crème fraîche in the curd, which produces a lighter and more delicate texture.

Jean Grogne is a relatively new cheese. It was developed in the 1980's by the long established Tournan family of *affineurs*, Rouzairre, in a decade which saw the widespread growth of *chevriers* - new cheeses appropriate to the traditions of the Brie and Champagne regions.

With an *affinage* of 6 to 8 weeks the cheeses develop a downy penicillium bloom which eventually discolours, revealing flecks of orange and cream. This is often when the cheeses is at it's best. Because of the shape of the moulds the cheese doesn't break down fully in the manner of a brie but instead ripens inwards from the rind, leaving a firmer centre or heart which can be quite dense and pasty. The best cheeses are soft a centimetre or two in from the edge. They should have a faint mushroomy aroma and a delicate sweet, lactic smell when cut, with a texture like ice-cream on the palate. Jean Grogne has a subtle creamy flavour and a soft sweet pate, with a slight tartness on the finish. A lovely cheese to serve as a whole unit to friends and family this Easter. Celebrate with a crusty baguette and a glass of bubbles.

petit livarot AOC

cow's milk, washed rind

Normandy, France

Livarot gained its name from the town of the same name, where one of the largest regional markets at which the cheeses were sold was located. Traditionally, the milk used in the production of Livarot came from the mottled brown and white native cattle called 'Normandes' (closely related to the Jersey and Guernsey breeds) which graze on native pastures of Normandy. Their milk has a naturally high butterfat content and is rich and yellow, ideal for making soft cheeses. It is these cattle, along with the native pastures and grasses and centuries of expertise, that combine to make Normandy one of the great cheese making regions of the world.

Originally the cheese-making process was split in two. The cheese was drained and put into moulds on the farms where the milk was produced. These young Livarots were then sold to cheese-makers, who washed, rubbed and turned the cheeses until the maturation process was complete and the mature Livarots offered for sale. Over time, these production methods changed. Farmers began taking greater control over production. The whole process then took place on the farms, thus creating a true farmhouse cheese.

It was in the late nineteenth century that Livarot reached its peak of popularity, at which time Livarot was eaten more than any other Norman cheese. In fact, it was so widely eaten that it was known as the 'meat of the poor'. In 1877, 4.5 million units of Livarot were produced.

Production declined steadily throughout the twentieth century. The upheavals caused by two world wars, along with advances in production methods, saw the destruction of farm based cheese-making of any kind. By 1960 there were only two Livarot affineurs left. In 1976 Livarot was given it's A.O.C. status and Graindorge

kept Livarot production from sinking to an insignificant level in the early 1980's. Production of what was once a farmhouse cheese is now limited to only a handful of producers. However, there is still an emphasis placed on traditional cheese-making techniques by the large factories and cooperatives that have replaced these *fermier* (or farmhouse) producers.

These mini units of Livarot are from Graindorge, the most respected producer of washed rind cheeses in Normandy. They are wrapped in raffia bands, hence the nickname the 'Colonel's cheese', with the bands resembling a Colonel's shoulder stripes. This were originally to help the cheese keep its form, but is now more for decoration, with the stripes a different colour for each dairy.

All Livarot is ripened in special wooden boxes and this micro-climate is essential for the cheeses correct maturation. Livarot is soft and plump, with a pungent orange rind - a result of the *b.linens* and coloured by annato. The aroma of the rind is much stronger than the cheese itself and is often removed when eaten in France. Soft and luscious, the perfectly ripe cheeses display a rich meaty flavour and an almost smoky, sweet aroma. As with most washed rind cheeses, beer is an ideal partner to Livarot. Experiment with some of the Belgian-style beers now available.

pecorino fiore sardo DOP

sheep's milk, semi-hard

Sardinia, Italy

Pecorino is the generic term for any cheese produced in Italy made purely from ewe's milk. Each region has its own distinct variety - for example, Pecorino Romano from the area surrounding Rome. Pecorino Sardo is the trademark name which has been given to Sardinian ewe's milk cheese. This tiny island lying off the coast of Italy is famed for it's sheep's milk cheese and produces around half of Italy's Pecorino.

Pecorino Fiore Sardo predates the Roman conquest of Sardinia, and may even go as far back as the Bronze Age. It is older than other varieties of Pecorino such as Pecorino Romano. It is an uncooked hard cheese still made using traditional artisan methods. It was originally made by mountain shepherds in their huts, whose central open fires give the authentic version its characteristic smokiness.

Pecorino Fiore Sardo is made from fresh whole sheep's milk curdled using lamb or kid's rennet. The milk is from native Sardinian sheep, descendants of the wild mountain sheep that still inhabit the island. Once poured into moulds, the cheese spends a brief period in brine before the moulds are lightly smoked and left to ripen in cool maturation rooms. The wheels for this Cheese Club Offer are at least twelve months old. Pecorino Fiore Sardo has a firm, granular texture, with the rind varying from deep yellow to dark brown in colour and a generally pale pate, from almost white to a pale straw yellow. It has an appealing floral flavour, nutty with a hint of sweetness and a distinctive, aromatic pate. Pecorino Fiore Sardo is an ideal grating cheese.

pyengana cheddar

cow's milk, stirred curd

Pyengana, Tasmania

Pyengana is from the local Aboriginal word for 'meeting of rivers' and Jon Healey is one of the only cheese-makers in Australia making cloth-bound cheddar, with a history of cheese-making over four generations. Apart from now having to pasteurise the milk, Jon still follows the method established by his great-grandfather at the turn of the century. The farm's herd of 180 Friesian cows (up to 200 in peak season) graze in the lush valley surrounding the George river in North-Eastern Tasmania. The herd is split into summer and winter milkers, but the peak period is during spring and autumn, when the volume of milk and complex balance of flavours are at their best. 'Nothing added, nothing taken away' is the company motto; as the milk is never standardised or homogenised, it varies every day according to the season.

The cheeses are made in a small 1400 litre vat heated by a wood fired boiler. After adding starter and traditional calf rennet, Jon uses a special technique of stirring the cut curd gently in the warm whey to ensure even acid development and its characteristic fine texture. After draining and hand-tearing, the salted curds are hooped into cloth bags made from unbleached raw muslin and larger cheeses pressed overnight in the dairy's nineteenth century mechanical bed press. They are then transferred to mature on pine shelves in the humid maturing room. The larger wheels need 15 months plus maturation to ensure optimum flavour and the right humid conditions so that the cheese matures fully. The two wheels we have for this Cheese Club Offer re both over two years old.

Being a true farmhouse cheese, each wheel varies in its individual characteristics according to when it was made. Pyengana Cheddar has an open texture and a well-rounded, lingering flavour with none of the harsh 'bite' of more commercial waxed cheddars. The flavour is buttery and hay-like when young. It becomes more pronounced as the cheese is aged, with honey, hay and summer grass on the nose.

gorgonzola piccante DOP

cow's milk , blue mould

Lombardy, Italy

Gorgonzola is one of the oldest named cheeses in the world, dating back to 879AD. Today, Gorgonzola Piccante is only legally made with the milk collected from a designated region of Lombardy and is protected from being copied by its D.O.P. status (designated area of protection), which was awarded in 1996.

As with many of the great blue cheeses, Gorgonzola was the result of a fortunate accident. Legend has it that Gorgonzola originated from the practice of using the milk of 'tired' cows to make cheese, as this made the best *formaggio nato dall'amore* - literally 'cheese born from love'. During medieval times in the Italian Alps it was common to graze herds of cows in the lush mountain pastures during the summer and drive them south as winter approached. The town of Gorgonzola was both resting place for these tired cows and a watering hole for the homeward-bound herdsman.

The long walk down the mountain, combined with the cows being at the end of their lactation cycle, meant that not enough milk was produced for a vat of cheese. Therefore, after the evening milking the fresh curds were made and hung in bags to dry overnight in cellars. The following day they were mixed together with the curds of the next morning's milk and the cheese could then be made. Due to differences in temperature and acidity these two curds did not blend together smoothly, so

that when a batch of cheese was forgotten about during seasonal festivities there were plenty of cracks and fissures along which blue mould could grow. Traditionally, Gorgonzola is still made in this manner, with the curd from two milkings, the morning and evening milk, being combined.

Our gorgonzola is made for us by the Mauri family in the northern Italian region of Lombardy. Here in this small family run factory we see the synthesis of ancient traditions and modern methods. Milk is collected from a cooperative of nearby farms, and cheese-making occurs every day except Sunday. After they have been formed, the cheeses are hand salted twice over five days and carefully ringed with a lattice of wooden slats. These slats not only provide support for the young soft cheese, but also draw out moisture from the curd, thus encouraging the formation of a unique yeasty rind which slowly becomes covered with powdery patches of grey mould. Each cheese gets turned every day (except Sunday) After a couple of weeks the cheeses are punctured with needles to allow air to enter the cheese and the characteristic blue-green mould to start growing. This happens again in another two weeks - by the end of the process each cheese will have been punctured over a hundred times. The mould grows in the 'needle tracks' left behind and can be seen later as straight veins rich in *penicillium glaucum*.

During this time, the rind is also developing into a thick, leathery exterior that protects the cheese and allows moisture to escape. The full maturation process takes approximately 3 months. At the end of this time the curd has become riddled with colour and the texture has lost all its youthful chalkiness.

Gorgonzola Piccante is a true cheese lover's cheese. It is quite firm and condensed in texture and is full in the mouth and nose with a spicy, sweet, rich end palate. This is quite different from the modern 'sweet' version, Gorgonzola Dolce Latte (or Bontazola), which is made from the curd of just one milking, and is sweeter and creamier. In contrast, Gorgonzola Piccante is strong and aromatic with its characteristic dark blue-green moulds. We have included Stephanie's fabulous recipe for fettucine with gorgonzola below.

The Cheese Club Recipe **fettucine with gorgonzola**

from Stephanie Alexander's *The Cook's Companion*

Ingredients:

125g Gorgonzola cheese
1/2 cup milk
20g butter
salt

freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons cream
500g fettucine
2 tablespoons freshly grated parmesan cheese

Combine gorgonzola, butter, milk, salt and pepper in a heavy-based frying pan over a gentle heat and cook, stirring with a wooden spoon, until thick and creamy. Add cream, then raise heat a little and cook, stirring, until sauce starts to thicken, about 5 minutes. Cook pasta in boiling salted water until al dente. Drain well and tip into a warmed serving platter with sauce and parmesan. Toss quickly and serve.

Serves four.

Available from the RHCL Larder:

fettucine
RHCL pepper mix
Murray River salt

Parmigiano Reggiano
Grana Padano

things to enjoy with your cheeses this Easter....

bread...

Spiced Fruit Bread

On spiced fruit breads, Elizabeth David states that 'the custom of eating cheese with these spiced fruit breads or cakes, is a very good one.' Who are we to argue?! Stephanie has slightly adapted this recipe - spicy, rich and full of fruit, it matches beautifully with the Pyengana Cheddar in particular. Also delicious with the Gorgonzola Piccante.

wine...

2003 Redgate Reserve Sauvignon Blanc

Margaret River, W.A.

Made from fruit picked from low yielding vines, this is an intensely flavoured and full bodied wine. Aged in French oak, it has rich stone fruit characters in the bouquet. Try this with the Jean Grogne or the Coolabine Caprice.

2002 Brown Brothers Sangiovese

Heathcote, Victoria

A cellar door release which has been developed at Brown Brothers 'Kindergarten' winery, a mini winery with a focus on testing and trialing new varietal wines in small batches. From vineyards at Heathcote, this wine is vibrant red in colour, with savoury aromas and black cherry characters. It has spent twelve months in French barriques, and has had no filtration so as to retain the maximum colour and flavour. It has good fruit in the palate, with bracing acidity and tight tannins. Enjoy with the Pecorino Fiore Sardo.

2000 Chateau De Jau Muscat de Rivesaltes

Rivesaltes, France

With an intense fragrant aroma of citrus and orange blossoms this muscat is made entirely from Muscat à Petits Grains. A superb dessert wine, the palate is rich and elegant. The texture is soft and silky with a long and lifted finish. Match with the Gorgonzola Piccante

good things...

Blueberry Conserve.

From Cunliffe & Waters comes this rich blueberry conserve with the added zest of oranges for extra piquancy. Enjoy this fruity conserve with the Jean Grogne and the Coolabine Caprice

Preserved Quinces

These wonderfully succulent preserved quince slices come from Ellisfield Farm on the Mornington Peninsula. A true farmhouse producer, the quinces are grown, preserved and packaged by Elizabeth and Roger on their farm at Red Hill. A must on any cheese platter.

2002 Sydre Brut tendre (off-dry apple cider)

Normandy France

2002 Sydre Argelette (dry apple cider)

Cidermaker Eric Bordelet is passionate about his cider. Trained as a sommelier, he then took over the family orchards in the Loire Valley. The orchards are dry farmed to retain the maximum flavour in the fruit. Up to twenty different varieties of apples can be blended to produce one cider - "the acidic fruit brings perfume, while the sweet ones contribute body." We have two varieties of this exquisite cider - dry and off-dry. It goes especially well with washed rind styles such as Livarot and Tresor, both cheeses from Normandy.

The Cheese Club Cheese Class

2. White Mould Cheese

White mould cheeses are surfaced ripened cheeses. They have a surface growth of white mould, *penicillium candidum*. If it is already present in the environment, this can grow naturally, but most cheese producers will spray it on to the outside of the young cheese or add it to milk during the production process. The growth of the mould on the outside of the cheese acts to break down the curds and proteins from the outside inwards, both by releasing enzymes and by physically sending down roots into the cheese.

Young white moulds are chalky and acidic with little depth of flavour - as they mature the flavour becomes stronger and the texture breaks down, becoming more buttery.

The growth of the mould will be affected by environmental conditions such as temperature, moisture, pH, salt and oxygen. It has a life of about six to eight weeks before it dies, when it can give off a strong ammonia smell.

As the two most famous styles of surface ripened white mould cheeses, just what differentiates Brie and Camembert?

They are produced using different techniques and were both named after the towns in which they were originally produced. Brie should come from the Ile de France, whereas a traditional Camembert must come from Normandy. The size of a Brie is much larger than that of Camembert - two kilograms as opposed to 200-250grams. Most Brie, when ripe, will have an aroma and flavour of mushrooms. Camembert tends to be stronger in flavour and more aromatic.

Wines to try with white mould cheeses

Oak-matured Chardonnay, light Pinot Noir, wooded Semillon, light fortifieds, ie Sherry

Breads to try with white mould cheeses

Baguette, Crusty unbleached white Sourdough

Good Things to try with white mould cheeses

Sundried pears, almond bread, blackcurrant jelly

Please note that in addition to The Cheese Club, the Cheeseroom at
RHCL is open seven days a week

We are able to receive orders (and visitors) at any stage
during this time. Delivery is available Monday-Friday for Melbourne metro
and Tuesday -Thursday ALL other areas Australia wide.

Please also remember that as a Cheese Club member you can now order
any Richmond Hill Cafe & Larder item* less a 10% discount.

It's our pleasure!

*excludes functions, freight and handling costs